

BROOKLYN TABERNACLE

BIBLE STUDY ON SOWING AND REAPING

Galatians 6:1-10—Nov. 2

Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. — Verse 7

This study was intended by those mapping out these lessons to be a temperance lesson. But the Apostle's words have no reference whatever to intemperance of one kind or another. He is addressing neither the world in general nor some poor inebriates, but the consecrated people of God, as he declares in the opening verses of this Epistle.

These consecrated Christians the Apostle calls brethren, and instructs them how to deal with any of their "brothers" who might be overtaken in a fault, entangled with some form of sin, by reason of weakness of the flesh or by unfavorable environment. The most spiritual of the Church should exercise themselves to bring about a restoration of the sinner to a condition of righteousness and fellowship with God. This they should do meekly, remembering that they also are imperfect, and may inadvertently fall into sin, owing to their intentions.

In this manner they were to "bear one another's burdens"—assisting one another in battling against the weaknesses of the flesh and the besetments of sin. Thus would they be fulfilling the law of Christ. This general law is one of service and self-sacrifice in the interests of others.

Those who, finding a brother overtaken in a fault, merely throw back their heads, denouncing the brother in a haughty, better-than-thou manner, have not yet attained a proper appreciation of what constitutes the law of Christ—the law of love which is to govern all the members of the Body.

Too Much Self-Esteem.
The Apostle points out that one great danger which besets all true Christians is headiness—thinking too highly of self and therefore not highly enough of the brethren, especially of those who stumble in some particular in which this individual has not yet stumbled. Whoever thinks of himself as somebody in God's sight should begin to realize that he is a nobody unworthy of Divine notice, except through God's favor in Christ. Such a person hinders his own progress in the good way.

Instead of seeking to judge or reproach his neighbor or his brother in secret, each should seek to prove out his own work. He should ascertain to what extent he has put away anger, wrath, malice, hatred, envy, strife, and put on meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, brotherly kindness, love. To whatever extent he discerns that he is progressing along these Scripturally defined lines, to that extent he has ground for rejoicing, without in any sense or degree seeking to compare himself with others and thus to estimate himself wholly by the imperfections which he sees in others. Thus each should seek to find his own weaknesses and to bear his own burdens.

Along the lines of this teaching, there is no room for clericalism. Rather, as the Apostle points out, those who are caught should communicate with those who teach, telling them of any blessings received or of any clearer views of God's Word which have come to them. He may also have meant that they should recompense that teacher either with thanks or with co-operation or in some other way help him to forward his work of teaching.

There is a principle at stake here. God operates along the lines of justice, and cannot be deceived. We might deceive even ourselves temporarily with specious arguments, but none can deceive Him. It is a principle of Divine arrangement that sowing shall bring reaping, and that it shall be of the same character as the thing sowed.

The Christian's Life-Work.
The reaping of spiritual blessings and of heart development will depend upon faithfulness in sowing to these ends. Whoever lives a spiritual life, seeking to serve God in act, word and thought, will reap the largest development of the qualities which make up character-likeness to our Lord. But those who seek to please their own fleshly minds or those of friends or relatives, will make proportionately less progress along spiritual lines.

To whatever extent we mortify the fleshly inclinations and seek to live in harmony with the Lord's Spirit, in that proportion we shall grow strong spiritually. If in our conduct we manifest to Him our love for truth and righteousness, He will account us worthy of everlasting life, knowing that when such receive the perfect bodies of the resurrection, they will live in absolute harmony with God.

In verses 9 and 10 the Apostle concludes his argument. All the consequences should continue faithful, and the sowing of living against the flesh, so that they shall be able to bring forth a harvest of life.

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BIBLE STUDY ON JESUS TRIED BY PILATE

Matthew 27:11-26—Nov. 22

Pilate saith unto them, What then shall I do unto Jesus, who is called Christ? — Verse 22

As early as possible in the morning, the chief priests hurried Jesus to the Praetorium, the judgment-hall of Pilate, Roman Governor of Judea. Pilate inquired as to what charge they had against Jesus. They evasively answered that He was worthy of punishment, else they would not accuse Him. Pilate reminded them that under the Roman usage they had great liberty in dealing with all disputes of a religious kind, and that therefore they should settle the case themselves. The priests responded that they had no power to inflict the death penalty, thus revealing that they had deliberately plotted to have Pilate put an innocent person to death. Then they accused Jesus of perverting the nation—telling the people not to pay taxes to Caesar and claiming to be the Jewish King—Messiah.

These were serious charges, which Pilate was bound to consider, and were totally different from those brought against Jesus at the Sanhedrin trial. Jesus made no defense; for He knew that the time had come for Him to die. He would not attempt to turn aside that which He knew to be a part of the Divine Program for Him.

Jesus Before Pilate and Herod.
Another account tells that Pilate perceived that the chief priests and the Scribes were moved with envy in making their charges. But he must not appear to treat lightly the charges respecting another king than Caesar. He therefore questioned Jesus; but receiving no reply, he went out to the Scribes and Pharisees, who had refrained from entering the Praetorium because the Passover season had begun. After hearing them, apparently he returned and asked Jesus, "Art Thou the King of the Jews?" Jesus inquired whether the question was based upon Pilate's knowledge of His teachings or whether upon the assertion of His enemies. Pilate replied that the chief men of Jesus' own nation had delivered Him, and that he wished to know the cause of their opposition.

Jesus answered that His Kingdom was not of this world—order of things. He was not, therefore, in conflict with Caesar. Pilate questioned Him a little further, and then went forth to the Jews, to whom he said, "I find no crime in Him." The chief priests were alarmed. They vehemently charged that Jesus was stirring up the people; and that, beginning away off in Galilee, He had preached everywhere. When Pilate heard this, he sent Jesus to Herod, king of Galilee, who was at his palace in Jerusalem. Herod had heard many things respecting Jesus, and was curious to see Him do some miracle. Jesus made no reply to the king's questions. The chief priests and the Scribes accused Jesus violently to Herod, who sent Him back to Pilate, after having, with his soldiers, mocked our Lord and put upon Him a gorgeous robe. This act of dereliction on Pilate's part, and Herod's return of the courtesies, bridged over an enmity between the two.

Neither Pilate Nor Herod Condemned.
On several occasions Pilate had released prisoners in honor of the Passover. The multitude cheered him and inquired whether he would release some prisoner that year. Thinking to get Jesus out of the hands of the chief priests, Pilate asked the people, "Whom will ye that I release unto you, Barabbas, the highwayman, or Jesus, who is called Christ?" Incited by their religious leaders, the multitude demanded the release of Barabbas. Pilate remonstrated, declaring that he found no cause of death in Jesus, whom he would chastise and then release. Jesus was therefore delivered over to the Roman soldiers, who were only too willing to mock and to scourge Him. Shortly afterward, Pilate brought Him forth to the waiting multitude. Wearing the purple robe and a crown of thorns, Jesus stood before them. Pilate then said, "Behold the Man!" See Him whom you are trying to have me put to death. He is one of the noblest specimens of humanity. Behold the beautiful dignity of His character. Whatever you have against Him, you will feel placated when you see His humility.

But they cried, "Crucify Him!" Pilate again remonstrated. Then they came to the root of the matter—that Jesus had declared Himself to be the Son of God, an assertion which they considered blasphemy. This made Pilate all the more afraid. He thought again to release Jesus. But the Jews persisted.

Finally Pilate yielded, saying in desperation, "I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man!" They cried, "His blood be upon us and our children!" And for more than eighteen centuries it has been so.



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